

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 and 24-78 are presently pending in this application. Claims 1, 2, 8, 11, 17, 54, 61, 62, and 78 have been amended. More specifically, claims 1, 17, 61, 62, and 78 have been amended to clarify certain features of these claims to expedite prosecution of this application, and without disclaimer of or prejudice to pursuing the subject matter of these claims in unamended or other forms in a continuation or other application. Claims 2, 8, 11, and 54 have been amended to improve the readability of these claims and/or correct minor typographical errors, and not for any reasons related to patentability. New claims 79-82 have been added.

In the Office Action mailed August 7, 2008, pending claims 1-22, 24-37, 39-47, 49-52, 55, and 57-78 were rejected. More specifically, the status of the application in light of this Office Action is as follows:

(A) Claims 1-22, 24-37, 39-47, 49-52, 55, and 57-78 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,470,450 to Langford et al. ("Langford"); and

(B) Claims 38, 48, 53, 54, and 56 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone conference on September 17, 2008 to discuss the present Office Action, the Langford reference, and the pending claims. The applicant requests that this paper constitute the applicant's Interview Summary. If the Examiner notices any deficiencies with this paper in this regard, she is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney to correct such deficiencies.

The following remarks summarize and expand upon the results of the September 17th telephone conference, and they also reflect the agreements reached between the undersigned attorney and the Examiner during the telephone conference. For example, the following remarks reflect the Examiner's acknowledgement that proposed amendments to independent claims 1, 61, 62, and 78 would distinguish these

claims over Langford. Claims 1, 61, 62, and 78 have been so amended and, accordingly, the Section 102 rejection of these claims and the claims depending therefrom should be withdrawn.

A. Response to the Section 102 Rejection of Claims 1-22, 24-37, 39-47, 49-52, 55 and 57-78 (Langford)

Claims 1-22, 24-37, 39-47, 49-52, 55, and 57-78 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over Langford. As stated above, the Examiner acknowledged during the September 17th telephone conference that Langford cannot support a Section 102 rejection of amended claims 1, 61, 62, and 78 and the claims depending therefrom (claim 2-22, 24-37, 39-47, 49-52, 55, 57-60, and 63-77). Accordingly, the Section 102 rejection of claims 1-22, 24-37, 39-47, 49-52, 55, and 57-78 over Langford should be withdrawn.

B. Allowable Claims

The applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 38, 48, 53, 54, and 56 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claim 38 has been rewritten in the stated form as new claim 80, claims 53 and 54 have been combined and rewritten in the stated form as new claim 81, and claim 56 has been rewritten in the stated form as new claim 82. Accordingly, claims 80-82 are in condition for allowance. Claims 38, 48, 53, 54, and 56 have not been rewritten in independent form because their respective base claim (claim 1) should now be in condition for allowance for at least the reasons discussed above. Accordingly, the objection to claims 38, 48, 53, 54, and 56 should be withdrawn.


As suggested by the Examiner during the September 17th telephone conference, claim 2 has also been rewritten in independent form as new claim 79. Accordingly, claim 79 is also in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the pending claims comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and are patentable over the applied art. The applicants accordingly request reconsideration of the application and a mailing of a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Aaron J. Poledna at (206) 359-3982.

Respectfully submitted,
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